University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

1985

Effective inservice programs

Harold Terry Ebert
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation

Ebert, Harold Terry, "Effective inservice programs" (1985). *Graduate Research Papers*. 2291.
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/2291

Effective inservice programs

Abstract

It is important to find the characteristics of effective inservice programs. First, the belief exists that professional preparation of teachers is a continuing process and self-renewal must occur if educators are to stay up with the changing needs of their students (Brimm & Tollett, 1974). Why must educators constantly make changes? One answer has been pointed out by Champagne (1980) and Wood, Thompson and Russell (1981). They suggest that as soon as educators leave their preparation programs they can expect to be effective for only five to seven years. Educators can become obsolete very quickly, thus the need for renewal to keep current with rapid change and expanding knowledge.

EFFECTIVE INSERVICE PROGRAMS

———————————

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Administration

and Counseling

University of Northern Iowa

———————————

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

———————————

by

Harold Terry Ebert

August 1985

This Research Paper by: Harold Terry Ebert

Entitled: Effective Inservice Programs

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement

for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

James Albrecht

6-28-85

Date Approved

Advisor/Director of Research
Paper

Norman McCumsey

7-3-85

Date Approved

Second Reader of Research
Paper

Norman McCumsey

7-3-85

Date Received

Head, Department of Educational
Administration and Counseling

It is important to find the characteristics of effective inservice programs. First, the belief exists that professional preparation of teachers is a continuing process and self-renewal must occur if educators are to stay up with the changing needs of their students (Brimm & Tollett, 1974). Why must educators constantly make changes? One answer has been pointed out by Champagne (1980) and Wood, Thompson and Russell (1981). They suggest that as soon as educators leave their preparation programs they can expect to be effective for only five to seven years. Educators can become obsolete very quickly, thus the need for renewal to keep current with rapid change and expanding knowledge.

Other reasons exist which suggest a need for more effective inservice programs. Due to declining enrollment, budget concerns, and teacher employment patterns, schools are finding themselves with a more mature staff (Fessler & Burke, 1983; Howey & Joyce, 1978; McLaughlin & Berman, 1977). In the past this phenomenon did not exist because new teachers with fresh ideas and approaches were constantly entering the school systems, or mobility of teachers was common. These factors helped to keep staffs more aware of change than is currently the case with today's more mature staffs.

Accountability (Champagne, 1980; Fessler & Burke, 1983) and the demand for competence, frequently in the headlines today, are concerns of the public which educators are acutely aware of. For mature staffs to be able to respond to these demands, they must remain diligent in their desire for lifelong learning.

Summarily, there is much to support the need for effective inservice programs; however, a method for developing and utilizing those programs is needed. To achieve this, one must be sensitive to those problems that have historically plagued inservice programs.

Problems

"Inservice teacher training is the slum of American education--disadvantaged, poverty stricken, neglected, psychologically isolated, whittled with exploitation, and broken promises and conflict" (Wagstaff & McCullough, 1973). While this observation may be something of an overstatement, it suggests that problems must indeed exist.

Lack of planning is one of these problems often cited (Brimm & Tollett, 1974; Byrne, 1983; Wood & Thompson, 1980) in irrelevant and ineffective inservice programs. The two adjectives are closely related. If an inservice program is irrelevant to the participants, there is little likelihood that it will be effective.

In addition to poor planning, execution of the
inservice program can be a problem. Kaping and McKeag
(1983) contend the time of day an inservice is implemented
can affect results. Furthermore they acknowlege that
"one-shot" inservice meetings have a lack of continuity
and cohesion, which results in little success, even in
a full-day setting.

Evaluation, or rather the lack of evaluation, is
another problem (Brimm & Tollett, 1974). Without an
adequate evaluation process based on feedback from
participants, inservice programs will be ineffective.
The total inservice process might be perceived as irrelevant
to the needs of those participants for whom it was
established, but in the absence of evaluation programs
that fact may never be disclosed.

The perception some administrators have regarding
teachers may also have an impact on inservice programs.
Some subscribe to the Theory X view that teachers dislike
inservice training, need to be persuaded to participate
and wish to avoid the responsibility of inservice (Wood
& Thompson, 1980). However, this concept is not supported
by the literature devoted to inservice.

In addition, Wood and Thompson (1980) indicate
inservice has often used teaching approaches which do
not agree with what is presently known about adult learning.

Furthermore, they emphasize that we have not modeled the kinds of teaching practices in inservice training which we expect teachers to use in their classrooms. Often there are no clear objectives, individualization, choice of learning activities, developed responsibility, or promoted trust and concern. Finally, and perhaps most serious of all, though approximately 80% of school budgets are allocated to personnel, very little is budgeted for inservice programs. In effect, staffs are being allowed to become obsolete. How many schools would allow their equipment and buildings to become useless by failing to maintain them (Wood & Thompson, 1980)? Yet, it happens in education, and the results are serious: first, as Duke (1977) indicates, thousands of talented teachers are leaving the public schools because of the lack of regard for their professional self-improvement. Sportsman (1981) cites this same phenomenon and goes beyond that to suggest that if teachers do not leave the profession they may become involved in highly academic graduate programs, which may add to their subject knowledge but add little to their other needs of teaching. In addition, Sportsman suggests, even more importantly, teachers often do not continue to develop either educationally or professionally.

All of the problems are serious. The challenge is to recognize them and to resolve them by implementing an inservice program which responds to them.

Effective Characteristics

Six characteristics of effective inservice emerge from the literature. Such programs are marked by:

1. Positive administration leadership and commitment

2. Teacher involvement

3. Responsiveness to teacher needs

4. Appropriate presentation methods

5. Sequential and ongoing organization

6. Evaluation systems dependent on faculty feedback

Since it is difficult to completely separate these characteristics (and not entirely desirable to do so) some overlapping occurs.

Positive Administration Leadership and Commitment

Positive administration leadership and commitment is important for effective inservice programs (Byrne, 1983; Champagne, 1980; Fessler & Burke, 1983; Hall, Benninga & Clark, 1983; Jones & Hayes, 1980; Kaping & McKeag, 1983; Mangieri & Kemper, 1983; McLaughlin & Berman, 1977; Rogus, 1983; Sportsman, 1981; Wood & Thompson, 1980). To begin with, the administrators and the school board must have an appreciation of the inservice program (Byrne, 1983). If there is no commitment in the form of policy

and resources, the staff will know that they are only
pawns in a game. With support from the top, the inservice
program should represent a valid attempt at staff growth,
and the sooner that support is gained the better.

Another benefit of positive leadership is the
relationship that can exist between teacher and administrator,
where the administrator is commited to help the teacher
through inservice. In order to have this relationship,
communication between the teacher and administrator must
be developed. Rogus (1983) identifies three ways to make
this possible: through day-to-day interaction with staff,
through involvement of the staff in decisions about the
inservice program, and through setting a good example for
the staff to follow. If such communication has been
established, the administrator can help the teacher determine
individual needs through analysis of those problem symptoms
identified by the teacher.

While the administrator must provide leadership and
support, he must not become too dominant. The administration
cannot be perceived by the faculty as domineering or
threatening if the program is to be successful. "Staff
development is first and foremost a state of mind, a
commitment to the growth of others" (Rogus, 1983, p. 16).

As a leader the administrator needs to keep this caution
in mind, because motivation of others is much of what
leadership is about.

Teacher Involvement

Clearly one of the most important characteristics
of effective inservice is teacher involvement (Brimm &
Tollett, 1974; Byrne, 1983; Cruickshank et al., 1979;
Duke, 1982; Fessler & Burke, 1983; Hall et al., 1983;
Howey & Joyce, 1978; Kaping & McKeag, 1983; Mangieri &
Kemper, 1983; Miller, 1977; Rogus, 1983; Ruff, 1974;
Sportsman, 1981; Wood & Thompson, 1980).

Teachers need to be involved in the planning and
development of inservice programs. This is essential.
Committees which involve a substantial number of teachers
to initiate, implement and evaluate the inservice programs
are effective (Byrne, 1983). An individual teacher
obviously knows, with supervisory assistance, what his
or her needs are. Faculty members are more willing to
participate in programs they perceive to be relevant and
necessary.

Another positive feature of teacher involvement is
the added credibility such programs have in the eyes of
the staff who believe that _their_ concerns are indeed being
met in the programs. Cruickshank (1979) reviewed a 1974
study by the Florida Department of Education which concluded

inservice programs featuring teacher involvement in planning were more successful than those without teacher involvement.

One of the benefits of teacher involvement is commitment to the inservice program. If commitment is obtained the program should be productive. When teachers feel they are genuinely involved in part of the process, they feel an ownership and responsibility for the success of the program.

Teacher-oriented programs are distinguished by their concern for those needs identified by the staff. Once staff needs have been identified, they become the focus of inservice. This again adds authenticity and should create teacher ownership and commitment to the inservice program.

Diversity and flexibility of inservice programs are important to permit a wider variety of options for content and presentation. This leads to opportunities for individualization. Inservice programs which do not meet the needs of the participants have no value and will corrode the whole program. One presentation generally cannot apply to the whole staff. For this reason, it is necessary to offer enough diversity and flexibility to provide for the individual differences on a staff. Both

the content of the program and the methods of presentation should reflect that concern.

Responsiveness to Teacher Needs

The identification of needs is basic to any successful inservice program (Byrne, 1983; Hart, 1974; Lillie & Black, 1976; Westerberg, 1983). Hart (1974) emphasizes that a needs assessment must occur for the planning of goals and objectives to proceed. Effective needs assessment requires the cooperation and pooling of knowledge and resources from both administration and teachers (Brimm & Tollett, 1974; Miller , 1977; Rogus, 1983).

Appropriate Presentation Methods

Effective inservice programs use what research has discovered about adult learning (Wood & Thompson, 1980), which concludes that many more adults function at Piaget's concrete operational stage of cognitive learning than was previously assumed. The consequences of these findings suggest inservice programs using the learn-by-doing method are more effective. Educator-teachers prefer someone to show them how to do it rather than tell them (Miller, 1977; Reeves, 1974).

Experienced professionals should be treated differently from students preparing for careers in education or new teachers just trying to master the basics of the profession.

Mature professionals seek the integration of new knowledge with experience. They also want to combine work, education and leisure into their inservice encounters. Collegiality rather than criticism is desirable from inservice leaders (Arends, Hersh & Turner, 1978).

Hall et al. (1983) and Howey et al. (1978) both conclude that release time should be provided for inservice. Ernst (1974) and Mangieri and Kemper (1983) go further in saying the release time and session length should be convenient if inservice is to be effective. Sportsman (1981) concludes inservice should be an integral part of the teacher routine during the regular day as part of the required duties of the job.

Consultants can be, and often are, used effectively in inservice programs, but there are some conditions which must exist for optimal benefit, (Arends et al. 1978; Lillie & Black, 1976). The compatibility of the consultant and clients must be assured. If the two are not able to adapt to each other's needs and methods, the exchange will not be successful.

The use of consultants requires a lot of time and effort by both the consultant and the person or persons responsible for the development of the program, as Mangieri and Kemper (1983) and Ruff (1974) have indicated.

A feasible alternative to consultants (McLaughlin
& Berman, 1977; Sportsman, 1981) is the use of local
resource people. The advantage of utilizing local
resource people is the close regular contact provided
to the clients served.

One final aspect of presentation is the importance
of proper delivery technique (Mangieri & Kemper, 1983;
Rogus, 1983). Those who make presentations to teachers
should be expected to model those practices which teachers
themselves are expected to use in their classrooms.

Sequential and Ongoing Organization

There is substantial evidence (Byrne, 1983; Cruickshank
et al., 1979; Duke, 1982; Miller, 1977; McLaughlin &
Berman, 1977; Ruff, 1974; Westerberg, 1983) endorsing
the effectiveness of sequential inservice programs
consisting of interchangeable presentations designed for
flexibility. Such programs can be developed for long-term
growth rather than for the ineffective outcomes which
result from one-shot, short-term programs.

Evaluation and Feedback

The need for evaluation is also clear (Bradley, 1983;
Kaping & McKeag, 1983; Lillie & Black, 1976; Mangieri &
Kemper, 1983; Miller, 1977; Rogus, 1983). The purpose
for evaluating inservice programs is basically the same
as for any evaluation, to find out if the goals and

objectives are being met and to what degree. The evaluation should provide the information needed to make ongoing plans for identifying topics and distributing resources.

Interestingly evaluation of staff during the implementation of inservice programs must be non-threatening if there is any hope for new skills to be developed. Positive and supportive feedback between the teacher and administrator is essential during initial periods of inservice.

Conclusion

Ideas about inservice have not changed drastically in the past thirty years, as Heywood (1954) suggests in the following observations about the importance of inservice:

1. Teachers need to keep up professionally in their work.

2. Teaching is an increasingly complex task.

3. Teachers today are faced with perhaps the heaviest demands ever made on them.

4. Most teachers desire to develop more effective ways of dealing with instructional problems.

These statements are just as valid today as they were thirty years earlier. However, it is unsettling that after thirty years a resolution of the inservice challenge has not been developed. In today's schools

there still exist hit and miss programs; one district
may have a good program while another school a few miles
away may not even have an inservice program.

It is difficult to fault Sportsman's (1981) philosophy
about inservice. He recommends it be an integral part
of the school program. Teachers need to continually
update their skills as educators, not only in subject
knowledge but also in instructional techniques. A
possible way of integrating inservice into the school
program may be through extended teacher contracts. This
extended time would be for the instruction of teachers,
not students.

Education has historically tried to adapt business
methods to the school setting. Many businesses have
funded continuing education programs for their employees.
The companies know this benefits them because of the
additional knowledge and skill attained by the employees.
And, of course, the individual also gains by becoming more
valuable in the eyes of his or her employer.

As the call for accountability and excellence in
education continues, intensified inservice is a possible
answer. Extended contracts to facilitate inservice will
be difficult to attain because of the additional costs.

However, business has benefited from effective inservice;
there is no reason education should not benefit from a
similar approach. Education has the information available
from research to provide effective inservice programs.
Obtaining support and financial resources from educational
patrons is the necessary link.

References

Arends, R., Hersh, R., & Turner, J. (1978). Inservice
education and the six o'clock news. Theory Into
Practice, 17, 196-205.

Brimm, J. L., & Tollet, D. J. (1974). How do teachers
feel about inservice education? Educational Leadership,
31, 521-525.

Bradley, J. (1983). Evaluating staff development schemes.
Educational Research, 25, 137-143.

Byrne, R. (1983). Inservice programs--What are the
essentials for making them effective? NASSP Bulletin,
67, 1-7.

Champagne, D. W. (1980). Does staff development do any
good? Educational Leadership, 37, 400-403.

Cruickshank, D. R., et al. (1979). What we think we know
about inservice education. Journal of Teacher Education,
30, 27-32.

Duke, D. L. (1977). Developing a comprehensive inservice
program for school improvement. NASSP Bulletin, 61,
66-71.

Duke, D. L. (1982). What can principals do?--Leadership
functions and instructional effectiveness. NASSP
Bulletin, 66, 1-12.

Ernst, W. (1974). What makes a workshop jell? Educational
Leadership, 31, 496-498.

Fessler, R., & Burke, P. J. (1983). Interaction: An essential in developing professional growth programs. NASSP Bulletin, 67, 43-49.

Hall, J., Benninga, J., & Clark, C. (1983). A comprehensive approach to the inservice training of teachers. NASSP Bulletin, 67, 17-21.

Hart, H. A. (1974). Self-renewal: A model. Educational Leadership, 31, 499-501.

Heywood, S. J. (1954). Inservice training programs can be evaluated. Administrator's Notebook, 3, no page.

Howey, K., & Joyce, B. (1978). A data base for future directions in inservice education. Theory Into Practice, 17, 206-211.

Jones, L. L., & Hayes, A. E. (1980). How valid are surveys of teacher needs? Educational Leadership, 37, 390-392.

Kaping, R., & McKeag, R. (1983). Brown bag seminars: An answer to the persistent inservice problem. NASSP Bulletin, 67, 39-42.

Lillie, D., & Black, T. (1976). Principles and procedures in technical assistance: An approach to educational changes. Educational Technology, 16, 33-36.

Mangieri, J. N., & Kemper, R. E. (1983). Administrators: The keys to successful inservice programs. NASSP Bulletin, 67, 26-31.

McLaughlin, M., Berman, P. (1977). Retooling staff
    development in a period of retrenchment. Educational
    Leadership, 35, 191-194.

Miller, W. C. (1977). What's wrong with inservice
    education? It's topless! Educational Leadership, 35,
    31-34.

Reeves, B. B. (1974). To change, to grow.../I/D/E/A/'s
    clinical training workshops. Educational Leadership,
    31, 541-544.

Rogus, J. F. (1983). Building an effective staff development
    program: A principal's checklist. NASSP Bulletin, 67,
    8-16.

Ruff, T. P. (1974). How to use the consultant. Educational
    Leadership, 31, 506-508.

Sportsman, M. A. (1981). What's wrong with inservice?
    Part I. problems and pitfalls. Curriculum Review,
    307-311.

Sportsman, M. A. (1981). What's wrong with inservice?
    Part II. making it work. Curriculum Review, 435-439.

Wagstaff, L., & McCullough, T. (1973). Inservice educators:
    Education's disaster area. Administrator's Notebook,
    21, no page.

Westerberg, T. (1983). Mastery learning for teachers: A
    competency based program for improving instruction.
    NASSP Bulletin, 67, 22-25.

Wood, F. H., & Thompson, S. R. (1980). Guidelines for
    better staff development. Educational Leadership, 37,
    374-378.

Wood, F. H., Thompson, S. R., & Russell, S. F. (1981).
    Designing effective staff development programs. In
    B. Dillion Peterson (Ed.), Staff Development/Organization
    Development (pp. 59-91). Alexandria, VA: Association
    for Supervision and Curriculum Development.